PROMENADE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE

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AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

MARGOT MAYO

LEADER

"PROMENADE"

Official organ of the American Square Dance Group. "The purposes of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard to race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with all who entertain similar views."

A.S.D.G. Constitution

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REPLY

No sooner had we licked the last stamp, stuck it onto a Promenade envelope, and slipped the latter into the mail-box, (or so we all will swear), than the post-man began flooding our doorstep with inquiries as to where all the vicious personages and characters referred to in our feature article last month could be found. As youwill remember, we mentioned quite a few "Nice People Not to Know", and in many instances told in what songs their misdeeds were related. But the requests now come for the books in which these songs will be found.

Now we of the ASDG have always felt that it was much more fun to go out hunting our own material, both from the pleasure of accomplishing something worthwhile by ourselves, and from the opportunities thereby provided for coming across engrossing new material, which would not otherwise have been found, had we merely copied the words of a song or the calls of a dance from some one else who had already gone to the trouble of looking them up.

Yet it is obvious that this entails a great deal of reduplicated effort, and therefore is a wasteful process. And so you will find members of the Group exchanging their words and music among themselves and with others who are interested or have some interesting version to offer. We find that a sort of compromise between unified effort and rugged individualism provides the best results.

It is in this spirit that we offer the list, carefully compiled by Alan, one of our hardest-working members, which appears on another page in this issue. In it you will find all the characters alluded to in last month's article; also a complete list of books in which these may be found and a key to aid you in correlating the two. Make good use of them!

Joe

Granny

A major part of Granny's life has been spent mothering children. First her father's twelve, then ten of her own, and now, through habit rather than neccessity, her son Steve's five. Either we are an un appreciative lot or Granny has become mouldy with age; at any rate, most of her counsel goes unheeded. We will listen attentively and agree that if she were us, she would do differently, but we point out that "we" are "us".

Coupled with her ever-ready and unsolicited advice, Granny has a "cleaning complex". During the day, when there is no one around to prevent it, Granny busies herself with the task of replacing garments which have been "left around" - such as shoes in the closet or hats in a hat box. At about nine in the evening, Steve will retire silently to his bedroom; through the stillness of the livingroom we will hear one shoe drop to the floor, then the other follows it - and now a low mumbling reaches our ears. Steve, his vocabulary of profanity well polished by daily use, is letting us know that he can't find his nightshirt. We all glance at one another, but Granny goes right on reading her paper. Then, feeling the tension, she looks up:

"Has Papa gone to bed yet?"

"Not yet", we lie, but she knows he's in the bedroom.

"Air ye gone to bed, Papa? Blow out the lights. I put some extyy covers on yer bed." She has piled two more quilts on the foot of the bed; he won't fall out of bed now, but he can't turn over, either.

Steve appears in the doorway, the tone of his voice betraying his look of self-control:

"Where in the hell's my night gown?"

"Sister, Papa's lost his night gown; get up and hunt it."

Then, as if it were the most natural place in the world, Granny will rush off to the bathroom, to return immediately bearing the nightshirt. A bedroom's no place for a nightshirt; she draped it on a nial in the bathroom, "so's ye could find it".

Last October tenth Granny was ninety. The following Sunday, as usual, or family loaded itself into the car and headed South for Lyda's farm on the desolate river bottom in Stone County. Lyda is one of Gran's three living children. This year the trip was pretty much as always, except there was only Pop, Mom, and Gran riding. There was twenty minutes of highway, thirty of rocky road, and three regular stops for Granny to get out. Time was when we had to ford James River in two places to get to Lyda's. But it was no trick * Steve just jacked to fron of the Model T off the chassis so the engine wouldn't get wet and we'd glub right over.

The day at Lyda's followed the regular pattern: discussion of the current scandal involving the natives or the school-teacher. Granny laughed uproariously at the shady stories and patted her foot in ominous agreement as to the fate of the wicked and sinful.

Granny attributed her inability to sing any longer to a "spell of bronchitis twenty years ago". Of course, age would have nothing to do with the tremor in her voice. But still I live in anticipation of her remembering all of one or two unfamiliar songs. She is like a broken record, in that she reaches the seventh or eighth verse of a song, and then, the spokes of her memory clogging up, she must go back and begin again. Or should she be interrupted in the middle of a verse, she will start the whole song over again.

I regret that my absence from home this year has prevent ed my actively helping Gran celebrate her birthday, but I have sent her a present, my love, and a promise to spend my annual leave at home in Missouri with her.

Edna Crumpley, Washington Div. ASDG

SWING THE OLD MAN'S DAUGHTER

Formation:
Square Set

Music:
Any fast 4/4 tune

Calls:

A. Honor Partners, Corners, Circle left
B. First gent out and swing the Old Man's Daughter
C. Then swing the Old Man
D. Now go on home, swing your own, let the Old Man swing his daughter
E. (Repeat twice more with third and fourth couples, then):
F. Allemande Left, Grand Right and Left - meet your Partner, promenade home

(Repeat three times more, each gent becoming active in turn. Finish by all honoring partners.)

Description:

A. Bow to your Partner, then to the lady on your left, all join hands and circle once around to place.
B. First gent out to the right, swing the second lady.
C. Then he swings the second gent.
D. The first gent swings his partner, the second gent swings his.
E. The first gent goes on to the next couple, repeats the above, then goes to the next, repeats again.
F. Each left turns his left hand lady once around with his left hand.
G. Then gives his right hand to his partner, walks by her, gives left hand to the next lady, and so on, right and left, around the set, until he meets his partner, when they promenade back in the direction the gent was going, to place.

HELP HER IN THE DAYTIME

Formation:
Square Set

Collected by one of our members in Charlston, Mass.

Music:
Any lively 4/4 tune

Calls:

A. Grand Right and Left all the way around
B. First couple out to the right and circle four
C. Take the opposite lady's hand and help her in the daytime
D. Drop hands, and then you circle four hands round
E. Take that lady to the next and circle four hands round
(Repeat as above twice with the other two couples)
F. Then swing in the center and six hands around, the other way back
(The other three couple repeat in turn.)

Description:

A. Each gent faces his partner, puts his right hand in hers, walks by, dropping hands, gives left to the next, and so on, right and left, around the set. This chorus is used only at the beginning, after the second couple, and at the end of the dance.
B. First couple joins hands with the couple on their right (couple #2), and circles once around.
C. The two gents each take the opposite lady, and "wring out the dishrag", thus: each gents joins hands with his opposite lady, they raise their arms high, and pass under their own arms, turning back to back, and return their original position, facing each other. This is repeated until the next call.
D. All drop hands, and then circle four, each gent keeping the lady with whom he danced last on his right as his new partner.
E. The first gent takes his new partner to the next couple, repeats the figure there, takes his next new partner to the last, repeats again there.
F. The active couple wrings out the dishrag in the center while the three other couples circle half-way around, and then back to place. On the call, "the other way back", the couple swinging tries to wring the dishrag in the other direction.

NICE PEOPLE NOT TO KNOW

Here is the list compiled by Alan which will tell you where to find the songs containing the stories of each of the characters in last month's article. The list below will also serve as a splendid guide to those who wish to find folk-songs, but don't know where to look; and most of them would make excellent gifts at Christmas for the already smitten collector.

Barbara Allan	A B C E G H I J K L
Gypsy Laddy	A B C E F G I J
Brown Girl	A B C E F G H I J
Pretty Polly	A B C L K
Daemon Lover	A B E F G H
Fair Clarette	A E F I M N
Little Mohee	A C F I N
John Hardy	A B
Pady Gay	A B C F H J
Twa Sisters	A B C F G H K M
Lord Lowell	A B C E F G H J N
Lord Randall	A B C F G J
Golden Vanity	A B C F G
Johnny Lands	C G
Maid Freed from the Gallows	A B C E F G N
Edward	B C D

To locate the character and his song, look in any book whose letter appears next to the name of that character.

A-J.H.Cox- Folk Songs of the South- Harvard University Press- 1925 Cambridge

B-Cecil Sharp- Folk Songs of the S. Appalachians- Oxford University Press- 1932- London

C-Dorothy Scarborough- Songcatcher in the So. Mts.- Columbia Univ. Press- 1937- New York

D-Cecil Sharp- Amer. & Eng. Folk Songs- Schirmer- 1918- New York

E-Carl Sandburg- American Songbag- Harcourt,Brace- 1927- New York

F-Dorothy Scarborough- On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs- Columbia University Press- New York

G-Phillips Barry- British Ballads from Maine- Yale University Press- New Haven- 1929

H-Reed Smith- Anthology of Old World Ballads- J. Fischer & Bros- 1937- New York

I-Chas. Niely- Tales and Songs of So. Illinois- George Banta Pub. Co.- Manasha, Wisc.- 1938

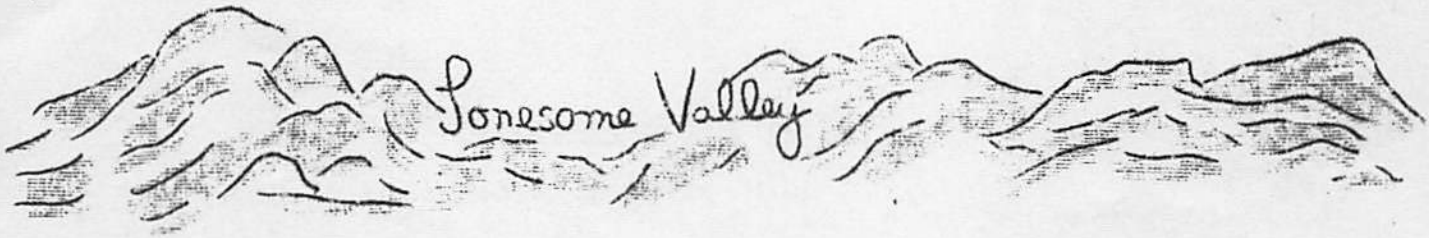
J-Josephine McGill- Folk Songs of the Ky. Mts.-Bobsey & Co.- New York- 1917

K-John Jacob Niles- More Songs of the Hill Folk(#17)- G. Schirmer- New York

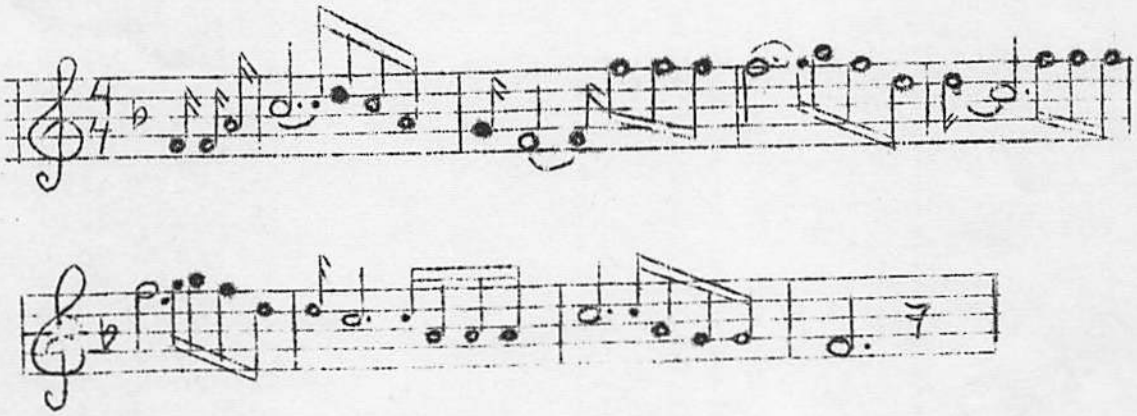
L-E.G.Sulzer- 25 Ky. Folk Ballads- Transylvania Ptg. Co. Lexington, Ky. 1936

M-R.P.Gray- Songs and Ballads of Maine Lumberjacks- Harvard Univ. Press- Cambridge- 1924

N-Harold Thompson- Body,Boots, and Britches- J.B.Lippincott- New York, Philadelphia- 1940.



This tune was sung to Alan by a young farmer's boy, Mack Harris, who has recently moved from Fairmont, Va. to Gutenberg, N.J.



You gotta walk that lonesome valley
You gotta walk it by yourself
There aint no one to walk it with you
You gotta walk it by yourself.

Mack's oldest sister, Lillian, said that there were other "choruses" but no verses that she knew of:

Some say that Noah was a foolish man
He built his ark on sandy land
Oh, if you could religion buy
The rich would live, the poor would die.

Some people say John was a Baptist
Some people say John was a Jew
But then again the Bible tells us
That John he had salvation too.

NOTES OF INTEREST

Bob Gold, an old member of the Group, has just returned to us after doing his stint for Uncle Sam. Released under the new twenty-eight-year ruling of the Draft Board, Bob has come back to us with a sergeant's stripes on his sleeve, and you can't say we aren't proud of him. Welcome home, Bob!

Since we moved into our new studio, we have found that the location and improved transit facilities have brought many new people to our Open House, and we have been having trouble accommodating all of them. So, in an effort to overcome this difficulty, we have decided to hold Open House <u>every</u> Saturday night. Everything else will be the same as usual, including our promise of a swell time.

For the second successive Thanksgiving holiday, the Group has been invited to Plum Point, the popular resort on the Hudson. As usual, we were cordially recieved and gained the enthusiastic response of the guests. As far as the Group is concerned, we'd be glad to spend every Thanksgiving at Plum Point.

It has been the policy of Promenade to have every piece of work done for it signed by its creator, except, naturally, that work done by its editor, Miss Mayo. The cover of the last issue was not so signed, either through the oversight or the modesty of the artist. So we'd like to take this opportunity to thank Pat Tobias for this and all the other work she has done.

It has given the Group much pleasure to see that its friend, Frank Luther, has just had his book, Americans and Their Songs, published. The book is subtitled: America's history through song, complete with music for seventy-five songs, and melody line for fifty more. We haven't seen the book yet, but knowing Frank as we do, we're sure it must be a wonderful contribution to the field of folk material.

As we have mentioned elsewhere in this issue, we have been happily surprised by the response to our work in Promenade. No sooner do we print an article than the mailman delivers dozens of letters asking for more [illegible] detailed information, demanding more articles on related subjects, or thanking us for our work. We want to thank those who have written and to promise to answer your requests as soon as possible; we want to be worthy of your thanks.

DISCussion

In almost every issue of Promenade, we have had a page of reviews of records, newly released and old favorites. But not one word has been said about the shops which make these records available to the members of our Group and to all those other urban dwellers who are interested in the folk culture of America. And so we feel that it would be appropriate to say a few words concerning one of the best-stocked and the most friendly of these shops.

Eric Bernay's "Music Room" is anything but pretentious; there is no fluorescent lighting, no modernistic furniture, no eye-catching bric-a-brac. It is nothing more than a "hole-in-the-wall" downstairs from the bookshop at 133 W. 44 Street. The walls are covered with shelves loaded with albums containing folksongs of all nations, besides all the other varieties of recorded music. For those who would listen, soundproof booths are provided; there are four clerks to tend to your desires.

But the overwhelming feeling of welcome is the thing that you like most about the "Music Room", and it is that which draws one there again and again. This welcome is extended not only to cash customers, but also to those who wish merely to listen. This is good business on the part of Mr. Bernay, for, when we do want to buy records, we natuarally turn to the place which we have come to know as friendly and hospitable.

And many others of all walks of life, of all creeds and beliefs, have found their way to this cozy little shop. These people have had only one thing in common: a genuine interest in contemporary history as reflected by the folk-songs of today and yesterday. In the "Music Room", Paul Robeson's album of Chinese songs depicting the struggle of the heroic Chinese people, or the "Six Songs for Democracy", relating the fight against Fascism of the Spanish people, are selling just as fast as Josh White's "Southern Exposure", dealing with Jim-Crow persecution in our own country, and the Almanac's recording of "Talking Union".

So if you happen to be near W. 44 Street and feel in the mood for hearing the Allisons singing their "Ballads of the American Revolution" or Pete Bowers doing a "talking blues" , drop into the "Music Room". Look around as much as you want, ask as many questions as you please, and listen to as many records as you can gorge yourself on. Don't fear any dirty looks if, after having done all this, you walk out without a stack of records under your arm - Eric Bernay knows you'll be back soon.

- J.R.